

Ryszard Mączyński
Katedra Historii Sztuki i Kultury
Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń
[Chair of History of Art and Culture
Nicolaus Copernicus University]

**Architekt Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Nadzór nad budynkami szkół
w latach 1777-1793**

**Architect of the Committee for National Education. Supervision of school
buildings in the years 1777-1793**

SUMMARY

The paper discusses issues connected with the office of the architect of the Committee for National Education (KEN), focusing on the functioning, objectives and actual projects overseen by the office.

The topics have not yet been subject to research, and so the study is based exclusively on source materials. It uses both published documents, but also makes recourse to a wide-ranging library search made at the Old Documents Archives (AGAD) in Warsaw and the Archives of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. The study has also relied on a compilation and analysis of all the preserved iconographic documentation, consisting of photographs of pictures in a portfolio of post-Jesuit constructions, which was destroyed in 1944.

The need to establish the office of architect of KEN stemmed from the fact the Committee was responsible for all kinds of construction work in buildings of the schools in its charge; it also formed part of the wider context, with a state construction service beginning to be organized in the second half of the 18th century. The first and only person to hold the office, for a tenure of sixteen years, was Stanisław Zawadzki. Educated in Rome, Zawadzki was a laureate of the Clementine Competition and a member of the Academy of St. Luke, and had designed many military, residential and church buildings in the Classicist style. His stint at the post of architect of KEN can be divided into three distinct periods: 1777-1780, which was a period of stock-taking of post-Jesuit property taken over by KEN; 1781-1787, when KEN was responsible for planning and supervision of work to adapt and repair buildings of tertiary schools; 1788-1793 – when KEN had to curtail its activities for political and economic reasons. Most extensive among the projects for which the architect of KEN was responsible were the reconstruction schemes for school buildings at Płock, Łuck and Lublin. Other projects – notably those at Kalisz, Łęczyca and Sandomierz, as well as in Warsaw and Poznań – were limited to minor adaptations, repairs or alterations. All of the modernization schemes were utilitarian in character, but they provided a good testimony of the ingenuity of their designer.

Unfortunately, Zawadzki could not fully display his talent and architectural knowledge within the scope of work commissioned by KEN. This was due to two factors: on the one hand, KEN constantly lacked the necessary resources and had to follow a rigorous austerity programme, and on the other, the system KEN had created was inefficient – one architect was in no position to supervise work conducted simultaneously in a number of cities and towns spread far and wide around the country, with not enough middle-level technical staff to be relied on for that purpose.

Analecta – Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki
[Analecta – Studies and Materials on the History of Science]
XV, 2006, 1-2, 7-88